

Friday, November 18, 2005

2005 North American Ferry Conference and Trade Show



Acting Chairman Mark Rosenker gave the keynote address at the 2005 North American Ferry Conference and Trade Show which was held in Delray Beach, Florida, on November 8th, 2005. The Acting Chairman summarized several important recent marine investigations and included an update on the Staten Island Ferry Accident, which was of particular interest to the group. He also spoke about the safety accomplishments and adopted recommendations of the Safety Board as a result of marine safety investigations, including improvements in lifesaving, communications between vessels, bridge resource management, fire safety standards for passenger cruise vessels, stricter training requirements for seafarers, and carriage of voyage data recorders.

I-95 Accidents That Killed Yale Students

The National Transportation Safety Board adopted a report on November 16, 2005 on the investigation into two collisions on Interstate 95, the second of which killed four Yale University students.

The accident sequence began about 4:50 a.m. on January 17, 2003, near Fairfield, Connecticut, when a Freightliner tractor flatbed semitrailer slid out of control on a turn, entered the highway median, partially overrode a barrier, and collided with two oncoming vehicles. About 11 minutes later, an SUV carrying nine Yale University students crashed into the semitrailer. The driver and three passengers in the SUV were killed; the surviving occupants were seriously injured.

The Safety Board determined that the probable cause of the first collision was the "Freightliner's loss of lateral stability, probably due to the operator driving too fast for conditions and to the presence of black ice on the roadway." Contributing to the accident, the Safety Board said, was the inadequate treatment of the roadway by the Connecticut Department of Transportation in response to inclement weather. The Safety Board also cited the State's failure to install a median barrier capable of preventing crossovers by heavy vehicles.

The Safety Board also found that the likelihood of survival would have been significantly improved if the SUV had been occupied by a maximum of five persons, rather than nine, and if all occupants had been wearing seatbelts. Only the driver and the front passenger were belted. The Safety Board reiterated a recommendation to the Governor and legislative leaders of Connecticut urging the enactment of stricter laws governing primary enforcement of seatbelt use.

Chairman Designate Advocates for Aviation Safety with the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA)

On November 9, 2005, Chairman Designate Ellen Engleman Connors served as the keynote speaker for the opening session of the NBAA's annual convention in Orlando, Florida. During her remarks, Engleman Connors noted the improving safety records in both commercial and general aviation and suggested the potential yet to be realized with current technological advancements and additional safety training programs. In particular, she stressed the need for continued vigilance by companies and pilots to the subjects of human fatigue and weather-related training. Engleman Connors closed her remarks with both praise for the Safety Board's field investigators for their expert work in aviation accidents and with thanks to the aviation community for its ongoing commitment to partnership in investigations.

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white jacket, stands behind a wooden podium. The podium features a sign for 'THE CENTURY COUNCIL' with the tagline 'Building a bright future for every child' and the address '4000 Research Square & Olive Road, Suite 100, Bethesda, Maryland 20814-4302'. A microphone is positioned in front of her. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Established in 1990, the Most Wanted list is a way for the Safety Board to focus attention on needed safety improvements in all modes of transportation. The list highlights recommendations that the Board believes would significantly reduce deaths and injuries.